



AMANDA TOSTE  
Court Executive Officer

## Superior Court of California, County of Merced

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 3, 2020

### **Merced Court to resume jury trials beginning June 15, 2020**

The Merced Superior Court will resume jury trials the week of June 15, 2020, and therefore will begin calling Merced County residents for jury service. The Court is committed to providing a safe environment for jury service and trials by adhering to local and state public safety and social distancing guidelines, implementing health and safety precautions at Court locations, and implementing additional precautions for jury service.

Jury service in California involves one day or one trial physical appearance or one week of on-call service. The Court appreciates your willingness to serve as a juror, and to help the Court continue to provide this vital function of our democracy during these extraordinary times.

***Please note: that if you are sick with respiratory symptoms, a fever or a cough, DO NOT come to the courthouse and DO NOT report to jury service. Jurors with these symptoms will be allowed to defer their service. See the Information for Jury Service Deferrals section below for details.***

#### **Health and Safety Precautions at Court Locations:**

- Face masks and/or face coverings will be required for everyone who comes to the courthouse.
- Temperature screenings are occurring at the entrances to all facilities.
- Hand sanitizing stations have been installed throughout the courthouse.
- Social distancing markers and signage have been deployed in all facilities.
- Increased sanitization will be performed by the Court's contracted janitorial service.

#### **Additional Health and Safety Precautions for Jury Service:**

- Fewer jurors will be summoned to court on any given day to allow for appropriate safeguards.
- Jurors will be summoned for different days of the week in order to reduce the number of jurors summoned on any one day.
- Social distancing will be maintained throughout the entire jury trial process, from jury assembly and selection through jury deliberation.
- Fewer trials will be in session at any one time to reduce the number of people in the courthouse.
- Empaneled juries will be seated and spaced around the entire courtroom to ensure social distancing.

- Jury deliberation will occur in the courtroom rather than in jury deliberation rooms, to ensure social distancing.

#### **Public Access to Jury Trials:**

- Members of the public may be precluded from attending jury trials in person, to ensure social distancing.
- Live video streams have been created for each courtroom so that members of the public can view and listen to jury trials and other court matters that are open to the public.

#### **Guidance for Summoned Jurors:**

- Be sure to bring and wear a face mask or face covering.
- You may consider bringing a small container of hand sanitizer with you to the courthouse as an additional precautionary measure.
- In order to be able to maintain social distancing, fewer jurors are being summoned. Please appear if you **do not** have health concerns related to COVID-19.
- If you have health concerns, please contact the jury commissioner's office at (209) 725-4121 to request that your jury service be deferred to a future date.
- To verify you are a summoned juror, bring your jury summons with you on the day you report,
- Bring your own bottled water, as a common water dispenser will not be available.
- Bring a book, cell phone, laptop, etc. to occupy yourself during jury assembly and selection, as there will be no reading or other materials available.

#### **Potential New Location for Jury Assembly (June 15 – July 24, 2020)**

Due to the seating capacity of our Jury Assembly Room, *alternate locations may be utilized* to allow for social distancing. Please check the weekly reporting instructions listed on the Court's website, jury mobile app, or the jury phone line for location directions.

#### **Jury Service at the Main Courthouse**

If you are summoned for jury service to the Main Courthouse, small groups will be called in per the Court's social distancing protocols.

#### **Information on Jury Service Deferrals**

Contact the jury commissioner's office at (209) 725-4121 to request that your jury service be deferred to a future date.

Jurors that find it necessary to request a deferral of service should contact the jury office at (209) 725-4121 or jury@mercedcourt.org. Standing Order 2020-03 authorizes the jury office staff to grant deferrals for a specified time not to exceed 90 days. This allows jurors to self-defer on a one time basis.

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